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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *July* the 26th, 1753.

I AM indebted for my paper of to-day to the ſcrupulous piety of one of my fair correſpondents, and to the undeſerved, though not uncommon, diſtreſſes of another. My readers will, I hope, forgive me the vanity of publiſhing the compliments paid me in theſe letters, when I aſſure them, that I had rather what I write ſhould have the approbation of a ſenſible woman, than that of the graveſt and moſt learned philoſopher in England.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

THE candour which ſhines ſo conſpicuouſly in your writings, the deference you expreſs towards the literary productions of women, and the genteel turn you give to every ſtroke of ſatire on our foibles, have encou-

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raged me to offer a few female thoughts on the arbitrary power of faſhion; or, as it is more properly and politely rendered, TASTE.

I AM not learned enough to define the meaning of the word, much leſs am I able to tell you all the different ideas it conveys; but according to its common acceptation, I find that it is applicable to every affectation of ſingularity, whether in dreſs, in building, in furniture, or in diverſions: and the farther we ſtray from decency or propriety in this ſingularity, the nearer we approach to TASTE.

THE prevalence of the CHINESE taſte has been very humourouſly attacked in one of your papers; and the greater prevalence of the INDIAN taſte among us women, I mean the taſte of going uncovered, has been as happily treated in another. But there is a taſte at preſent totally different from this laſt, the impropriety of which can hardly, I think, have eſcaped your obſervation, though it has your cenſure. It is the TASTE of attending divine ſervice, and of performing the moſt ſacred duties of our religion with a hat on. However trifling this may be deemed in itſelf, I cannot but conſider it in a ſerious light; and have always, for my own part, refuſed complying with a faſhion, which ſeems to declare in the obſervers of it, a want of that awful reſpect which is due to the CREATOR from his creatures.

IF temporal monarchs are to be ſerved with an uncovered head; I mean, if the ceremony of uncovering the head be conſidered and expected by the higher powers as a mark of reverence and humility; ſurely reaſon will ſuggeſt that the SUPREME OVER ALL ſhould be approached and ſupplicated with at leaſt equal veneration: yet ſtrange as it may appear to the more thinking part of our ſex, this uncouth taſte of being hatted prevails in almoſt all the churches in town and country; matrons

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of ſixty adopting the thoughtleſs whim of girls in their teens, and each endeavouring to countenance the other in this idle tranſgreſſion againſt the laws of decency and decorum.

FAVOUR me, ſir, either by inſerting this ſhort letter, or by giving ſome candid admonitions on the ſubject after your own manner. I am acquainted with many of your female readers, and am aſſured that your frequent remarks upon their moſt faſhionable follies will have a proper effect. Reproofs are never ſo efficacious as when they are tempered with good-humour; a quality which is always to be found in the lucubrations of Mr. Fitz-Adam; among whoſe admirers I beg to be numbered, and am,

SIR,

Your humble ſervant,

CLARISSA.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

To whom, ſir, ſhould the injured fly for redreſs, but to him who has made the world his province! You will not, I am ſure, be offended at my taking this liberty: the Spectator was not above receiving and publiſhing the epiſtles of the female ſex; nor will you, Mr. Fitz-Adam, who are writing in the cauſe of virtue, diſdain the correſpondence of an innocent young creature, who ſues to you for conſolation in her affliction, and for reproof of one who has broke through all rules of honour and morality. I will make no farther preface, but proceed.

MY name and circumſtances I need not acquaint you with; let it ſuffice that I am the daughter of a gentleman, and that my education has been ſuitable to my birth. It was my misfortune to be left at fifteen without a father; but it was with a mother, who in my earlieſt infancy had ſown the ſeeds of religion and virtue

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in my heart; and I think I may without arrogance aſſure you, that they have not been thrown away upon unprofitable ground. After this greateſt of loſſes we retired to a country village, ſome few miles from town; and there it was, ſir, that I firſt knew to be wretched.

We were viſited in this village by a young gentleman, who as he grew intimate in the family, was pleaſed to flatter me with an affection, which at firſt I did not imagine to be real--I ought to have told you that his fortune was independent, and himſelf neither fool, nor coxcomb. Young as I was, ſome little ſhare of experience told me, that gentlemen at his age imagine it a moſt material branch of politeneſs to pretend love to every pretty woman they fall in company with; but indeed, Mr. Fitz-Adam, I had a heart that was not to be caught by compliments; I examined his behaviour with the ſtricteſt attention; not a grain of partiality or ſelf-love, at leaſt I imagined ſo, clouded my judgment; the flights of poetry and paſſion, ſo common in others, gave place, in him, to modeſty and reſpect; his words, his looks were ſubſervient to mine, and every part of his conduct ſeemed to ſpeak the ſincerity of his love. The approbation of friends was not wanting; and every one expected that a very little time would unite us to each other.

For my own part, I built all my hopes of happineſs upon this union; and I flattered myſelf, that by an obedient and affectionate behaviour I might make the life of him I ſincerely and virtuouſly loved as happy as my own. But it was not to be! Some common occurrence occaſioned our ſeparation; he parted, ſeemingly, with the greateſt regret; aſked and obtained permiſſion to write; but ſome months elapſed without my ſeeing or hearing from him. Every excuſe that partiality could ſuggeſt I framed in his favour; but I had ſoon more convincing proofs of his neglect of me than either

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his abſence or his ſilence. On his return, inſtead of apologizing for his behaviour, inſtead of accounting for his remiſſneſs, or of renewing the ſubject of all our converſations, he appeared gloomy and reſerved; or whenever he inclined to talk, it was in the praiſes of ſome abſent beauty, or in ridicule of marriage, which he aſſured me it ſhould be many, many years before any one ſhould prevail with him to think of ſeriouſly. With many ſuch expreſſions, and a few careleſs viſits, during a ſhort ſtay in the country, he took his leave with the formality of a ſtranger, and I have never ſeen him ſince. Thus, ſir, did he cancel an acquaintance of two years ſtanding; the greateſt part of which time he had employed in the moſt earneſt endeavours to convince me that he loved me.

If I could accuſe myſelf of any act of levity or imprudence in my behaviour to this gentleman, the conſciouſneſs of ſuch behaviour would have prevented me from complaining; but I appeal to his own heart, as well as to all who know me (and he and others who read this lettter, will know from whom it comes) in vindication of my conduct.

Yet why ſhould I flatter myſelf that you will take any notice of what I write? The injuſtice I complain of is no new one; it has been felt by thouſands; or if it had not, I have no invention to give entertainment to my ſtory, or perhaps to make it intereſting to any but my own family, or a few female friends who love me. They will thank you for it, and be obliged: And to make it uſeful to your readers, tell them in your own words and manner (for I have no one to correct what I write) that the cruelleſt action a man can be guilty of, is the robbing a young woman of her affections, with no other deſign than wantonly to abandon her. Tell them, ſir, that though the law takes no cognizance of the fraud, the barbarity of it is not leſſened; for where

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